

Case Name: United States of America v. City of Portland

Case Number: 3:12-cv-02265-SI

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Written testimony

Topic: Ride-Alongs

Dear Judge Simons,

I'd like to speak on the amendments to the Police Accountability Commission's work on the subject of "requiring Police ride-alongs" as a requirement for any Community Board for Police Accountability (CBPA) member. I was selected as a Police Accountability Commissioner, a group of people of cultural, economic, social and experiential backgrounds. My lived experiences gave the group insight into police interactions with the public, with the media and between each other that some other members of the PAC had not seen. Many of the other members of the PAC had police interactions throughout their lives which were shared and helped shed light on what can happen when the police interact with civilians.

The 2020 ballot measure spelled out the rules and stipulations which we had to work within. We found that our diversity allowed for some eye opening perspectives and created the most balanced and fair system of accountability that I could ever imagine. While some people knew law, some knew community organizing, some knew business, some had experiences in other cities or states, some were lifelong residents of Portland.

One of my life experiences I brought to the group was through my occupation as a photographer. I was assigned to do a Ride-along with a female Portland Police Officer for an assignment about pairing female and male officers as partners and how it might make police interactions with the public less "aggressive". At this point I'd like to point out that I'm a white male with all the privileges and unearned confidence that comes with that. At that point I'd only witnessed police interactions with other people, or along with a group of people. I wasn't concerned about my safety and my life experiences didn't stop me from stepping into the police cruiser.

I'm a listener, I spent 4 hrs driving around NE Portland that morning listening to the officer explain how she wanted to fight, wanted to be aggressive, wanted the chase. She was disappointed that most of her job was "social worker". We interacted with homeless people, entered empty buildings and responded to various property crime calls. At the end of the ride-along I knew I was uncomfortable and would not be going on another one ever. I could not place my finger on exactly why, but it came into clearer focus when I accompanied a reporter to a "FBI" training facility across the river in Vancouver. This facility was used by "law enforcement" in general for training purposes. There we were allowed to shoot various guns on a shooting range and then participate in the "video game" training simulation. This was basically a video game interaction scenario where you choose "if and when" to use your firearm. After seeing the design of that training simulation I became extremely fearful of law enforcement in my vicinity. I understood immediately how quickly decisions were made that could and do end lives.

In my time since this assignment I have witnessed many more police interactions and have myself been the victim of targeted police violence while I was doing my job. With my lived experiences, even with the privileges I have in our society, I will never step foot in a cop car again. Does this mean that I should not be able to serve on the Community Board for Police Accountability? What if a family member of mine was killed by police? What if I had been assaulted (I felt like I should say "wrongly" assaulted but should the police be assaulting anyone?). It is reasonable to expect people with lived experiences to apply for work that requires them to attend this performative action? Is it fair to the candidates of this position to have to go through the trauma they already hold? Why is this specific requirement being pushed? And who benefits from this requirement? I personally doubt that many of the applicants for the Community Board for Police Accountability would feel it was reasonable to

require Ride-alongs.

I strongly urge you to rescind/remove/halt this requirement as it only creates barriers for people. No one is gaining anything by requiring Ride-alongs. They might be of interest to someone who hasn't had that kind of experience, but optional at most. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Cameron Browne
former Police Accountability Commision commissioner
Photographer